

STALKING VIOLENCE

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March 11, 2009

The news this week alone reads like one nightmare after another. Distraught people going on rampages - maiming and killing either specific persons or those in the wrong place at the wrong time. I will not give any more attention to specific examples, but I am more than a little ticked off.

It's been a long standing opinion that when your life sucks, it's somehow acceptable to do whatever you want, to whomever you want, when you want to do it. Well, it's not only unacceptable, but we've got a bunch of cowards out there who can't face up to their own faults, and who won't even be honest with themselves about how their life got all fadangled to begin with.

It's time to have a crash course in preventing violence, of any kind. The first step is *acknowledging* there's a problem. There are two middle steps. The first middle step is *doing something* productive to resolve it. The second step is *accepting* personal responsibility for your own problems. The last step is *resolving/moving past* it. If this means getting professional help, or enlisting the help of loved ones, friends, or colleagues, do it, and do it without delay.

You see, you're allowed to feel bad all you want. You can cry into your pillow, scream at the moon, and complain all you want about your miserable existence. You're allowed to go out and get help for what ails you; presumably, a doctor of some sort or perhaps an alterative medicine route. Who really cares where you seek help; as long as you get it before you become a nuisance to society, a number in prison, or a statistic on a piece of paper.

There is such a thing that helps us grow and become better individuals. It's called the truth and that is something that can't be bought. Another thing that makes us better people is being accountable for our actions, even if we detest the punishment or consequence. Running away from problems has never helped a damn soul, and that's never going to change.

When people tick us off big time, we have options. We can ignore it, challenge it, or remain oddly unaffected by it.

If we ignore our tormentors, what have we gained? It's called pride, and pride is knowing that no one can tear us down because we *know* we are worthy. Pride doesn't have to prove anything, ever. Have we lost anything in the process? No.

If we challenge our tormentors, one thing is certain. Not only will you be playing a losing battle, but you might not live to see tomorrow. If you succeed in hurting your tormentor physically, you're either going to jail or some mental institution for a very long time. Neither place is a picnic, and then you'll be surrounded by yet more people who may pose some kind of threat to you. If your plan is to kill yourself before you get caught, you are leaving this earth a coward, besides the fact that your mess will be left for someone else to deal with. Do you really want to leave a trail of pain and destruction when *it never had to come to that*. What do you gain from challenging someone to a fight? Nothing. Your dignity isn't going to be feeling any better. Besides having an adrenaline rush, you will be sweating with fear and anxiety of someone holding you accountable for your ego-based actions. What do you lose by letting it go? Nothing.

Can you be oddly unaffected by others who put you down and attempt to make you feel like crap? You most certainly can, and I'm proof of that. I've been in abusive situations, been subject to hostile and nasty individuals, and suffered my own set of traumas over the years. I've been through the sadness, depression, and hopelessness that follows same. I could have gone off the deep end and inflicted wrath on countless people, but I didn't, because I've always known deep down that nothing stays the same, life is always changing, and what affects us now is not indicative of what is in store for us in the future. Violence simply doesn't pay. It can only lead to more trouble. I don't feel superior to anyone else, and I don't usually place any judgments on others. None of us is perfect and we all mess up sometimes. I simply remain in my own happy place, no matter what else is happening around me. This requires self discipline and a consistent attitude make-over. I remind myself what kind of person I want to be and what I want to accomplish. I understand that I'm not always the easiest person to deal with, and I understand that everyone has off days. But, life is too short to hold negativity inside; it poisons our minds, bodies, and souls. So, yes, you can chose to be oddly unaffected by anything, while at the same time, maintaining your compassion and human-ness.

It's normal to get frustrated and angry at life, and when life and people throw you a hard ball and try to strike you out, it just intensifies those feelings even more. If you are the subject of a bully or bullies, it's high time you start feeling better about yourself and leave these losers in the dust. Nobody should ever dictate how you think or feel about yourself. Enlist the help of others, but never fall into the trap of thinking the only solution is getting violent. Whether you're a student or an adult, there are always going to be nasty, ugly people who will try to make you feel bad and who might even attempt to sabotage you in some way. This is unavoidable because human

nature is not based on logic and practicality. We look at our problems on an emotional level, and we can get really screwed up that way if we don't get a grip on it early. Emotions run high when we are feeling the most threatened, which is why it's imperative at those times that we withdraw temporarily from the source of the problem, until we can think rationally and clear about the next step that needs to be taken.

If you're being abused in any way, violence is still not the answer. You must find the courage to seek help and get out of your immediate situation. It might be the hardest thing you ever do, but you do it for yourself because you need to. It's not a question whether you want to; that's not an option. When someone is abusive towards you, there are no good excuses that can explain it away. You get the hell out of there right away; later on, when you're in safe hands, you can decide where to go from there. And, for crying out loud, if you are subjecting your children to violence or if they are witnessing it, stop being scared long enough to realize that the cycle of violence can be broken, and children learn foremost about what's important by what they *see*. Love and abuse are not good partners. Love and mutual respect are. Do the right thing. You are not alone. That's worth repeating. You are not alone.

If you feel your situation is beyond help, now is the best time to get yourself some help, of some kind. You might be peeved at one of your professors for giving you a bad grade. Maybe you deserve it, maybe you don't. But, taking out your anger by lashing out won't fix your grade and most certainly will get you kicked out of school. I could go into a whole sort of different scenarios, but you know what, I shouldn't have to. It's high time you exercised some self restraint and self control, and if you don't know how to do that, enlist the help of those who know what they're doing. Your life shouldn't come down to being on the run from the law, or locked up indefinitely, because you couldn't deal with your problems. They are *your* problems, not the rest of society. However, it takes *all* of society to put an end to these ridiculously tragic situations that did not have to happen, and shouldn't have happened in the first place.

If you have the attitude that your problems are unique from others, stop being delusional and destructive. The problem with violence is that plenty of people turn the other cheek and feign indifference/ignorance. They don't want to be bothered speaking out or helping someone in need. Well, then don't be shocked when things go tragically wrong. It is all our business, and the fact that you may not see it as such, is part of the problem.

Grow up! It's freaking time to admit your life is a mess, your emotions are over-rung, and you lack the ability on your own to think with clarity. Grow up and get some damn help for yourself. Find something that makes you feel

good about yourself. Join a club or activity. Get involved in your community. Move to another country if you can't find any place that suits you, but damn it, stop with all the nonsense, because it makes *no sense* at all.

Whoever the hell William J. Johnson is or was, he stated, "*The most significant change in a person's life is a change of attitude. Right attitudes produce right actions.*" And James B. Conant, "*Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.*"

And last, but not least, Aldous Huxley, "*Experience is not what happens to you, it is what you do with what happens to you.*"

Nobody is saying that you can't ever get upset, angry, or really ticked off, or even that you're not entitled to your *feelings*, but damn, get a grip, grow up, and get some common sense.

Violence is not the answer. It will never be the answer.

To solve these problems, we have to all take a good hard look at ourselves and resolve to be less quick to judge, and more compassionate and kind to each other, as well as to ourselves.

Yeah, I'm really ticked off, but I'll get over it and not resort to immoral and stupid measures. I hope you'll do the right thing, too.

Peace out.